

2005

A Community of Equals

Clay Pelon

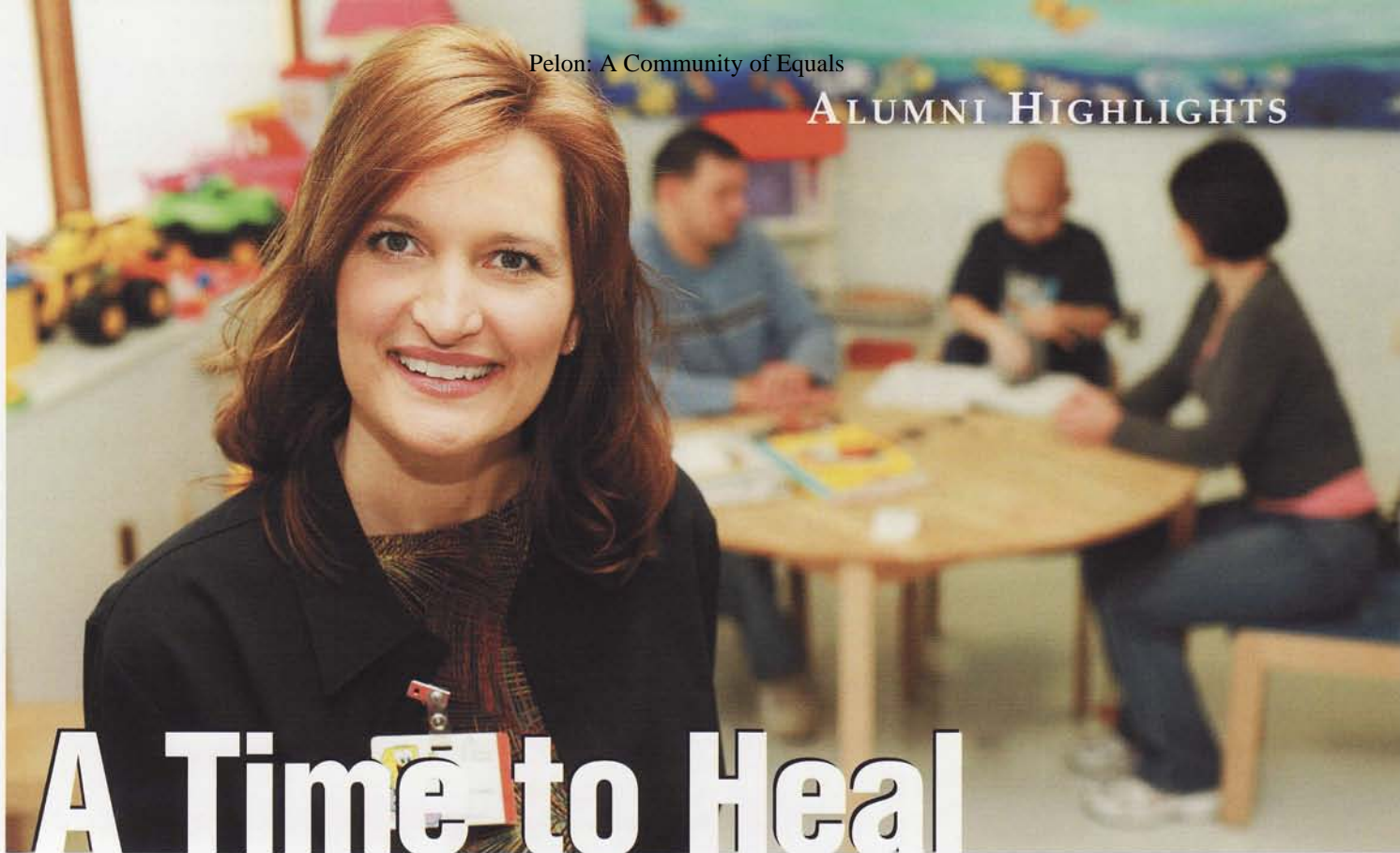
Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/colleagues>

Recommended Citation

Pelon, Clay (2005) "A Community of Equals," *Colleagues*: Vol. 1: Iss. 2, Article 11.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/colleagues/vol1/iss2/11>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Colleagues by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gvsu.edu.



A Time to Heal A Time to Learn

by Dottie Barnes

As the first hospital teacher at DeVos Children's Hospital, Jami Hoeksema helps kids maintain a more normal life.

She credits the leadership training she received at Grand Valley State University for the success of her new position as educational liaison for children who need extended medical care.

"Children in these difficult situations need school," said Hoeksema. "It gives them hope, normalcy and control during a time that can be filled with confusion and anxiety."

The two-time Grand Valley graduate provides individualized instruction for each student with input from the child's teacher.



"Being hospitalized doesn't mean learning has to stop. It simply means the environment and curriculum must be adapted to the child's current situation," she said.

Hoeksema goes right to the bedside of cancer patients, dialysis patients and general pediatric patients. "This is empowering for the kids. By facilitating learning while a child is hospitalized or receiving treatment, they are less likely to re-enter the classroom one step behind," she said.

In 1988, Hoeksema earned a bachelor's degree in language arts and certification as a K-8 teacher. She spent the next 10 years at Tri Unity Christian in Wyoming, serving as an elementary teacher, elementary assistant principal and then principal of the middle school. During this time, Hoeksema returned to Grand Valley and in 1997, earned a master's degree in leadership. She also taught middle school math at Knapp Charter Academy.

"My leadership training at Grand Valley was absolutely necessary for the success of my current job. I use what I've learned every day," she said. "I came well-prepared because my undergraduate instruction was diverse and my leadership training helps me relate to the children, parents and staff."

Hoeksema said her job is never dull — teaching first grade reading one day and

middle school government or high school algebra the next. In her role as hospital teacher, Hoeksema describes herself as an advocate for children. "I want my students to see that I'm there because I want to be, and that I can see their potential and what they can accomplish," she said. ☺

A Community of Equals

by Clay Pelon

In response to recent hate crimes on the GVSU campuses, the College of Education has taken action. Throughout the summer, the leadership team will look at ways to address diversity and tolerance.

To build community, the COE has and will host ice cream socials around the theme "A Community of Equals." The events feature faculty and student interaction. In addition, bracelets featuring the theme are provided for attendees to show support for tolerance at Grand Valley.

